

otherwise not as supporters of the Administration. There is evidence that Collier and Sibbison were informed as much at a March 15, 1995, meeting with opponent lobbyists, and that Counselor Duffy and IGMS Director Skibine were told of the parties' political affiliations (though not campaign contributor status) as early as Feb. 8, 1995, in a meeting with Democrats in the Minnesota congressional delegation. At least one high-level Interior official – most likely Collier – even knew that Chairman Fowler and the DNC were interested in the fate of the casino decision. There is no direct evidence, however, that Interior staff allowed any such information to influence their own views on the action that should be taken on the Hudson casino application or their comments and recommendations to others involved in the decision-making. After the Area Office sent its recommendation of approval to Washington, Interior officials made efforts, including several meetings with supporters and opponents, to give all parties an opportunity to submit their views on the Hudson application.<sup>764</sup> Although the Interior staff in Washington involved in evaluating the application, recommending a decision and drafting the denial letter had different perspectives on which statutory provision should control the decision, none of these career Interior civil servants supported approval of the Hudson casino proposal as submitted. Moreover, the evidence suggests that none were aware of any political pressure from the White House or the DNC when they prepared and submitted their draft decision.

As for Secretary Babbitt himself, there is no evidence that he played any meaningful role in Interior's decision to deny the Hudson application, and there is no evidence that he was part of

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<sup>764</sup>Nonetheless, the applicants complained to Interior in the months following the decision that they were not afforded an opportunity to correct any deficiencies in their application. Conversely, the opponents complained – up until their meeting with the DNC and Fowler – that their views were not being given a full or fair hearing.